

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

DHA-02 EUR-12 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /108 W

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R 041605Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8265

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SHUM, EGEN, TD

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS SETS HIS SAIL

AGAINST PREVAILING CARIBBEAN WINDS

SUMMARY: SPEAKING TO THE NATION IN A TELEVISED ADDRESS ON TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO INDEPENDENCE DAY, PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS FIRMLY ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND HIS OPPOSITION TO THE EXTENSION OF GOVERNMENT POWER AND INTERVENTION. HE CONCEDED THAT A DIRECTIVE SYSTEM SUCH AS HE HAD SEEN IN CUBA AND EASTERN EUROPE COULD BE EFFECTIVE IN ACCOMPLISHING SPECIFIC NATIONAL GOALS BUT AT A COST TO INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM THAT HE WAS UNWILLING TO PAY. HE CONTRASTED TRINIDAD'S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT WITH OTHER THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES IN WHICH MILITARY DICTATORS RULE BY FORCE OR WHERE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS ARE FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS' SPEECH ON AUGUST 31, THE 13TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WAS CONCILIATORY AND A VERY POSITIVE AFFIRMATION OF HIS SUPPORT FOR THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF INDIVIDUALS AND AGAINST EXTENDING THE STATE'S POWER AND CONTROL. WILLIAMS SAID THAT, IN SPITE OF DIFFERENCES WHICH EXIST ON MANY OTHER SUBJECTS, HE BELIEVED THAT ALL GROUPS IN TRINIDAD COULD AGREE ON THREE AREAS OF NATIONAL CONCERN: 1) GOVERNMENTAL ACTION TO CONTROL THE IMPACT OF INFLATION; 2) USING THE INCREASED REVENUES FROM PETROLEUM TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT; AND 3) MAINTAINING THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

2. AS A SMALL COUNTRY, TRINIDAD COULD NOT DO MUCH TO CHANGE THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE REST OF THE WORLD WHICH HAVE CAUSED INFLATION LOCALLY, WILLIAMS SAID, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE STEPS THROUGH PRICE CONTROLS AND SUBSIDIES TO SOFTEN THE IMPACT OF RISING PRICES ON THE PEOPLE. TURNING TO HIS SECOND POINT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE AIM OF THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE "MORE AND NEW JOBS, THE FULLEST UTILIZATION OF OUR PETROLEUM RESOURCES TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION, THE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF BASIC ITEMS WHICH WE NOW IMPORT." HE ADDED THAT TRINIDAD SHOULD AVOID MAKING THE MISTAKE OF SOME MAJOR OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES WHO HAVE BEEN SO SEDUCED BY THE PROSPECT OF A SHIFT IN THE INDUSTRIAL BALANCE OF POWER THAT THEY HAVE PUT ASIDE THE DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF THEIR CITIZENS. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT THAT TO HAPPEN IN TRINIDAD.

3. ON POINT THREE, WILLIAMS EMPHASIZED THE DESIRABILITY OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY WITH A RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS. HE SAID THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT GREATER CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF TRINIDADIAN, THIS DID NOT MEAN TOTAL STATE CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY. SUCH CONTROL WOULD, HE SAID, SUPPRESS INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE AND VOLUNTARY EFFORT WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE VERY IMPORTANT IN PRODUCTION AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES GENERALLY. WILLIAMS SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD DURING HIS TRIP THAT TRINIDAD WAS NOT MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF ITS RESOURCES. HIS REPLY WAS THAT, IF ONE INCLUDED HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE EQUATION, TRINIDAD WAS MAKING MUCH BETTER USE OF ITS RESOURCES THAN IT WOULD UNDER A "VAST EXTENSION OF STATE CONTROL AND STATE INTERVENTION."

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4. "THOSE WHO PROPOSE THE ONE-PARTY STATE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO JUSTIFY IT ON THE GROUND THAT IT GUARANTEES ANY GREATER NATIONAL STABILITY OR PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS." HE NOTED THE DISMAL PROGRESSION OF MILITARY GOVERNMENTS IN SOME COUNTRIES AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND ENCOURAGED THE CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. HE DEFENDED TRINIDAD'S SYSTEM OF WESTMINISTER PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AGAINST CRITICS WHO SAY THAT SUCH A SYSTEM IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND CHARGED THESE CRITICS WITH USING THE SAME RACIST ARGUMENTS EMPLOYED BY IMPERIALISTS TO JUSTIFY THE CONTINUATION OF COLONIALISM.

5. WILLIAMS FURTHER AMPLIFIED HIS COMMENTS IN A RAMBLING INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE AUGUST 31 TRINIDAD GUARDIAN.
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HE SAID THAT GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN AUTHORITARIAN CONTROL AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, HE WOULD CHOOSE THE LATTER, HOWEVER INEFFICIENT IT MIGHT BE IN THE USE OF MATERIAL RESOURCES AND HOWEVER DIFFICULT SOME OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MIGHT BE. WILLIAMS ILLUSTRATED HIS POINT BY REFERRING TO THE ABILITY OF CUBA TO CONSTRUCT APARTMENT BUILDINGS VERY RAPIDLY TO HOUSE ITS CITIZENS. THIS WAS POSSIBLE, ACCORDING TO WILLIAMS, ONLY BECAUSE THE STATE DETERMINED WHERE ITS CITIZENS WOULD LIVE AND DID NOT ALLOW THE BUILDING OF FAMILY HOMES. "WHEN IT COMES TO THAT, I SAY - NOT ME."

6. COMMENT: FOLLOWING CLOSELY ON HIS TRIP TO CUBA AND EASTERN EUROPE, DR. WILLIAMS' COMMENTS INDICATE THAT THE FEARS OF SOME TRINIDADIAN THAT THE PM'S TRAVELS PORTENDED SIGNIFICANT POLICY MOVES TOWARD SOCIALISM HAVE NOT BEEN BORNE OUT. WHILE WILLIAMS' REMARKS ARE IN KEEPING WITH HIS PREVIOUS POSITIONS AND PHILOSOPHY, THEY OFFER A CONSIDERABLE CONTRAST TO THE SOCIALIST RHETORIC OF MUCH OF THE THIRD WORLD. MORE PARTICULARLY, THEY ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE RECENT PRONOUNCEMENTS OF TRINIDAD'S CARIBBEAN NEIGHBORS - JAMAICA AND GUYANA. THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH HAS BEEN VERY WELL RECEIVED BY MANY MIDDLE-CLASS TRINIDADIAN WHO HAVE NOT APPROVED OF THE INCREASING INVOLVEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND WHO HAVE VIEWED WITH TREPIDATION THE MOVEMENT TOWARD SOCIALISM IN OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE CARIBBEAN.
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